

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 895  
By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to commend E. Keith Johnson for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as Veterans' Affairs Coordinator at East Tennessee State University and the James H. Quillen College of Medicine.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, E. Keith Johnson is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure as Veterans' Affairs Coordinator at East Tennessee State University and the James H. Quillen College of Medicine, Mr. Johnson has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson studied at the Community College of the Air Force, graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Law and Government with Honors in Discipline from Eastern Michigan University, and earned a Master of Business Administration degree from East Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, born in Carter County and a current resident of Washington County, Keith Johnson is a member of a family with ties to Tennessee that predate statehood; over more than two centuries, his family has come to know the value and the cost of freedom as it has seen countless Tennesseans serve to protect this country; and

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans continue this time-honored tradition today; E. Keith Johnson holds a position of honor in this State's rich military history; and

WHEREAS, he served in the United States Air Force as an enlisted airman and later as an Intelligence Officer, with service in the theatre of operations during Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Southern Watch; and

WHEREAS, after completing his honorable tenure in the military, he became Veterans' Affairs Coordinator at East Tennessee State University and the James H. Quillen College of Medicine in 1997, in which position he serves approximately four hundred students each year with duties that include counseling service members, veterans, disabled veterans, and the dependants of certain disabled veterans and advising them on academic matters; and

WHEREAS, his passion can be found at the nexus of veterans' affairs and higher education, and his service in that field can only be classified as outstanding; and

WHEREAS, among his many accomplishments, he was the architect of Tennessee's "Veterans' and Dependents' Post-Secondary Education Assistance Act of 2000," was instrumental in the creation of the Veterans' Memorial on the ETSU campus, created a professional veterans' education benefit programs administrator online discussion forum called "VetEd.info Forums," and has helped veterans secure an estimated \$300,000 in back benefits through claims and appeals; and

WHEREAS, recently, he assisted college students from ETSU and surrounding areas who were mobilizing for active military duty with Company L, Third Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division in putting their educational benefits, financial aid, and other affairs in order, and he has also donated his time and talents to assisting other units, such as the 278<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment of the Tennessee Army National Guard; and

WHEREAS, highly respected throughout this state and our nation, Mr. Johnson is known as a leader of the utmost knowledge and ability; a frequent and talented speaker on veterans' educational matters, he is a former member of the American Council on Education's Military Registry Advisory Committee and recently completed his second appointment as a high education representative to the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson is an Executive Board Member, Annual Conference Planner, and Presenter for the Tennessee Educational Association of Veteran Programs Administrators,

and his expertise has also been utilized in numerous other capacities to benefit this State; he has been Tennessee's representative to the Southern Region Education Committee for Veterans since 1999 and served as a consultant to and representative of former Governor Don Sundquist in conjunction with an invitation to appear and testify before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Benefits during hearings on the "21<sup>st</sup> Century Montgomery GI Bill Enhancement Act" in the First Session of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress; and

WHEREAS, E. Keith Johnson has received numerous national and state distinguished and meritorious service awards and military awards and decorations in recognition of his personal and professional excellence; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and his uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, he is an extremely giving person and epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend E. Keith Johnson, Veterans' Affairs Coordinator for East Tennessee State University and the James H. Quillen College of Medicine, for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee, salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and wish him much success and happiness in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.